The IDLER

Public Occurrences, Comment, Excursions & Rational Entertainment

Nr 20 MAY 1966 35c THE COPY

Are the Poor Ready for Progress?

THE BATTLE AGAINST poverty threatens to become the most leisurely conflict since the French captured Bordeaux in 1453, bringing to a close the Hundred Year's War. No one in a position to do anything substantial about the problem is in a hurry. Lyndon Johnson is preoccupied with Vietnam. Congress is preoccupied with Lyndon Johnson. The mayors and their dukedoms to protect. And for the average affluent American, eliminating poverty is about as important a cause as preventing the extinction of the giant panda or reducing glaucoma among the Bantu.

Those in power are settling down for a nice long stay in the trenches, comfortable in the knowledge that: the cause of poverty is the Negro family structure; there is nothing we can do about the older unemployed; we must start with the prekindergarten level and work up; poverty will disappear with our expanding gross national product; poverty is due to a complex combination of factors that the OEO consultants are just beginning to analyse; things are not moving quite as fast as they might because of Vietnam and the problem of inflation.

And if all of that isn't Miltown enough for the conscience we can always relieve ourselves with the realization that no matter how much we do for the poor they will still put coal in their bathtubs, rip the wallpaper in public housing projects, urinate on flower beds planted at government expense, copulate out of wedlock immediately upon receipt of their welfare checks, refuse to learn anything taught them at school, decline to answer the door when the employment agency comes round with its weekly job offer, repeatedly roll the local social worker, slash the tires of the community action coordinator's car and boo Sargent Shriver.

During the long early years of the civil rights awakening in this country you often heard people say that the Negroes weren't ready for integration. What these people really meant was that *they* weren't ready for integration.

Today we are not ready to give the poor a fair share of the opulence of America. Few explicitly state that the poor are not ready for progress, but as a nation we appear to operate on just such a premise.

The poverty program is a horrible hodgepodge of timidity, hypocracy, dillitantism, opportunism, and procrastination. Its good works amount to mere nibbles at the problem. It will neither cure poverty in the short run nor eliminate its causes in the long run.

The root reason for our failure to act forcefully against poverty is that we do not care enough to do enough. Even if the Vietnam war were to end tomorrow and the threat of inflation disappear by the next sunset, we would quickly find new excuses to dilly, dally and delay in the elimination of this country's injustices.

It is true that there are no easy solutions. But it is also true that we do

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Idler

Published 11 months a year in Washington, D. C., for the edification, information, and entertainment of its readers. Thirty-five Cents the copy. Three Dollars a year (Four Dollars abroad).

Contents Copyright 1966 by The Idler. Permission is granted to reproduce articles from The Idler, provided The Idler is given proper credit and a copy of the reprinted article is sent us.

Material independently copyrighted or upon which rights have been reserved may not be reproduced without the permission of the author or copyright holder.

Editor: sam smith
125 Fifth St. N.E.
Washington 2, D.C.
202-546-9662

Associate Editors:
Mike Bell
Erbin Crowell

Circulation, correspondence, coffee:
Sally Crowell

Printer: Warren Printing Company
6 State St.
Warren, R. I.
401-245-8888

have the ability to alleviate substantially our problems while we are seeking final solutions.

Part of the trouble is that the politicians and bureaucrats who are supposed to be solving the nation's problems operate with a totally different sense of urgency than the people affected by the problems. Sargent Shriver does not go to bed hungry. Labor Secretary Wirtz is not one of 3.5% unemployed who are meant to be grateful that they are no longer part of 4% unemployed. Lyndon Johnson, Attorney General Katzenbach, Secretary Connor, the Council of Economic Advisors, the Joint Economic Committee of Congress and their families do not have to live together in one apartment without hot water or sufficient toilets. It is easy in the air-conditioned offices of the Capital to speak of eliminating poverty in a decade or two. The rats, the hunger, the dirt, the all pervasive atmosphere of despair do not enter the comfortable chambers where comfortable men speak comfortably of the "long term solution to the poverty problem."

Two years ago, the Council of Economic Advisers told the President:

"Conquest of poverty is well within our power. About $11-billion a year would bring all poor families up to the $3000 income level we have taken to be the minimum for a decent life. The majority of the nation could simply tax themselves enough to provide the necessary income supplements to their less fortunate citizens. The burden — one fifth of the annual defense budget, less than 2 per cent of the GNP — would certainly not be intolerable.

. . . It will be far better, even if more difficult, to equip and to permit the poor of the nation to produce and to earn the additional $11 billion and more.

We can surely afford greater generosity in relief of distress. But the major thrust of our campaign must be against causes rather than symptons."

The philosophy of the Council of Economic Advisers typifies much of our thinking about the poverty problem.

Such an approach might be more palatable if the elimination of the causes of poverty were forseeable in the near future. Such is clearly not the case. At present we are treating properly neither the causes nor the symptons of poverty.

We could be doing much more. We could institute a guaranteed annual income. We could raise the minimum wage and extend its coverage considerably further and sooner than the Administration has sought. We could reform our tax laws to relieve the unfair burdens placed upon the poor.

We could vastly increase housing, school and hospital construction. We

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HUGH HAYNIE ...

"Lunch Box? I Ain't Got Y'Lunch Box, Kid"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

could greatly increase old age pensions. We could start a massive public works program.

These are not perfect solutions but they are a few examples of the sort of thing we could be doing today — not ten years from now — to reduce substantially poverty in this country.

We have procrastinated too long. When the little Dutch boy saw water pouring through the dike, he did not wait for feasibility studies, or for engineers to design a better dike, or for the Netherlands school system to produce better engineers, he stuck his finger in the hole.

A group of Washington teenagers recently marched on the local poverty office to demand more federal assistance in their neighborhood. When a

LBJ; Plenty of Hot Water

government official attempted to explain the problems that had caused funding delays etc., etc., one of the youths told him, "This is poverty, baby. Come down to our level."

He was dead right. The government has handled the poverty problem as if it didn't involve real human beings with real suffering.

Our approach is not unlike a character in one of Erskine Caldwell's novels. All through the book he promises, "I'm gonna fix this step soon as I find a nail." He never finds the nail and the step, of course, remains unrepaired. *(s.s)*

A Renaissance Budget

By Enid Saunders Candlin

THE LITTLE TUSCAN CITY of San Giorgio was highly agitated that spring day in 1530. It was considering its annual budget. True, in those times, the annual expense account over which the noble Duke and his councillors pondered was not yet called a budget; therefore, it had not been necessary for Dante to introduce the subject into his Inferno, as he would no doubt otherwise have had to do. One of the nine rings of Hell would have had to have been consecrated, had he but known, to a horrid vapor of melting computers, and the gentlemen concerned with inland revenue might have found themselves eternally pursued by ferocious dog . What the noble Duke and his advisers were doing was simply trying to find ways to squeeze more out of the neighborhood in order to keep up with their mounting but unavoidable expenses in those difficult days of the early sixteenth century. How simple life had been in the Mediaeval town! It was the Renaissance that had made everything so complicated, so dangerous. How corrupt the youth had become! the rival Leagues! the Turks!

San Giorgio was walled, and had picturesque turrets and bastions, made of the local golden stone, beloved of artists. This material was not, unfortunately, very durable, and during the last summer when the evil and treacherous city of San Petro had unsuccessfully attacked San Georgio (for no motive but that of greed, jealousy and spite) one of the gates had been sadly damaged, and part of one wall had crumbled. These would have to be repaired.

Keeping the city strong was very expensive. For instance, the cost of the new scaling ladders was terrible.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Da Vinci had been a very clever fellow, no doubt, but he never thought of the costs. He would have ruined them in Milan. Wish he had, thought the Duke, thinking of the Sforzas. The armorers were always demanding more for chain mail, helmets and swords; the ordnance wanted more for cannon balls. There were bound to be several small wars this summer — no way out of it. Besides, life would be intolerably boring without wars — what were the young men to do? The honor of San Georgio had to be maintained, and there was only one way of doing it. The troops, of course, did not need to be paid, but they had to have the opportunity to loot — that was only fair — and the city also needed loot and prizes of war. That was really the only satisfactory way to balance the budget, but you had to risk your capital first. "What I always say," remarked the oldest and most boring of the councillors, "what I have always maintained, and with your August Permission will now say again, is that the best plan is to capture, early in the spring, at least fifteen leading members of the nobility, and even a few rich merchants, in Tuscany and Lombardy, and hold them for ransom. That makes everything simple and easy."

There was the cost of spies, too; intelligence seemed every year more risky, more expensive, and, perhaps, less valuable. These men insisted upon extremely good daggers, and the city had to supply them. The mint, also at this juncture, was clamoring for more copper, more silver. That was fairly easily disposed of — base metal was the answer, of course. There was a gloomy party within the Council, which though unable, naturally, to thwart the Duke, could and constantly did prophecy inflation. "What will happen if you do that?" asked the noble Stefano. "You'll have too much money chasing too few goods, and the best brains will emigrate."

Then it was going to be necessary to put aside a considerable sum for exploration over the rim of the world. This was, perhaps, nonsensical — a great part of the citizenry expressed themselves very freely on this point — what was to be gained from these far journeys to places like — what was it — San Salvator? Far better to clean out the wells of the city, every one of which needed scraping and deepening. The water was polluted. And so on. But the Duke was a forward-looking man, and he realized that the extraordinary journey of that Genoese Columbus had changed the whole face of the known world. Anyone who let his horizon remain fixed on his own city wall would be — why, mediaeval! Science was going to be the thing; here was this man Galileo, who, though in trouble with the Church (and who wasn't?), was very evidently a genius, And then there was Copernicus. And aside from these high principles, he could never hold up his head in Mantua and Florence if he didn't back some scientist or explorer. Genoa was a laughing stock among the Italian cities for having let Spain get the credit for Columbus.

And lastly, there was the question of prestige and pomp: processions, pageantry, tournaments and so on; and then a good deal had to be put out on subsidizing artists. There were so many good artists in Italy nowadays, and every chapel in Tuscany, certainly in San Georgio, apparently had to have its ceiling redone, and to to have new images of the Holy Fam-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ily. And what ducal family could neglect its own portraits?

Besides all this, there was the Church — an expensive institution — but it was difficult to deny it anything, the consequences might be so appalling. At least, thought the Duke, the Crusades have gone out; we don't have to finance a Crusade. Thank God, Constantinople is ruined, and Venice doesn't affect us anyway. His own household expenses were heavy, and the cost of building the new palazzo was much more than he had expected — the guilds were very demanding, and organized labor was threatening to control the whole future of the city.

The Council sat for the better part of a week, while rumors ran back and forth between the Palazzo and the ladies' balconies, the market place and the inns, the piazetta in front of the Cathedral and the glacis where the horses were being galloped. The cost of grain, the amount of fish necessary for feast days, the number of vials of poison which had to be kept in stock for emergencies (there would be a good deal of entertaining in the coming year) — all these details were worked out. The budget was balanced. A tournament and a horse race were announced to celebrate the event. Taxes would not be raised, in spite of the heavy increase in expenditure. This would be met in the following ways: four local wars, a planned campaign of highway robbery, the seizure of the goods of a given number of rich and unpopular persons in the area, ten captives to be held for ransom, and a city lottery.

"Long live our noble Duke!" cried the happy citizens of San Georgio, drinking his health with free wine offered on the occasion of the fiesta. "Long live Progress, Science, and Humanity!" A salute was fired from the castle guns, and the Duke went hunting to forget the trials of the past week. As it happened — how difficult it is to make plans! — he was himself captured that very day, by a neighboring city, that very San Petro, which had arranged to balance its own budget in this simple and easy manner. His ransom was, in fact, so enormous that San Georgio thought it better to forget about him and bring in another ducal family. Budgets are very difficult!

Driving Us to Death - II

Ralph Nader

THE AUTOMOBILE DOES not have to adhere to any meaningful public safety standards for crashworthiness and operational safety. Existing state standards are limited to headlamps and a small number of other equipment; they are grossly inadequate even in the areas they purport to cover and enforcement is virtually nonexistent.

There is no public inspection to insure that automobiles are built even to conform with the manufacturers' own quality control standards.

The role of automobiles in causing accidents and injuries goes virtually uninvestigated. The police are duty bound to enforce laws written almost exclusively in terms of driver fault. Clearly, there are differences between accident causes and injury causes — the latter causes are overwhelmingly related to the auto's design. Yet note the accident report form in state after state and see how there are no categories for the cause of injury and only cause of accident — vehicle failure is routinely considered owner or driver neglect.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HUGH HAYNIE ...

"All We're Asking for Is a Little More Time to Catch the Killer Ourselves!"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ralph Nader is the author of the book, "Unsafe at Any Speed," a highly critical review of the automotive safety situation. Published here are excerpts from his recent testimony before a Senate subcommittee looking into the problem.

There are no statutory criminal penalties for manufacturing a defective automobile dangerous to life. An automaker is not within the scope of such laws. But drivers are exposed to criminal fines and imprisonment—manslaughter charges—for gross negligence leading to one or more deaths. Driver behavior is within the rule of law; vehicle design and manufacturing behavior is outside the rule of law. Could corporate and managerial immunity from public accountability be more complete?

The industry has actively cultivated a consumer ignorance about safety by promoting a concept of an automobile that stresses style, ride, and performance. While eager to tell the potential customer about the rated horsepower, acceleration capability, and kinds of interior decor, the automaker will not tell him, even if he demands it, such important facts about the safety of the cars as: brake stopping ability, tire skid and blowout resistance, roof collapse strength, door latch and door hinge strength, the dash panel's and windshield's cushioning ability, the amount of rearward displacement of the steering wheel and shaft under a forward crash into a fixed barrier, the side and roof crash resistance of the vehicle and the seat anchorage strength. These technical values can all be given in quite precise terms against clearly expressed criteria. Since the automakers boast about their instrumented crash testing, they must have the answers. But they will fight to the end to deny their publication for the motoring public — notwithstanding the fact that nearly half of all cars will be involved, sometime in their use, in an injury-producing collision.

Lamentably, this industry's secrecy places severe restraints on company researchers and ruptures scientific communication with professional colleagues outside the industry. Again and again, I have listened to independent scientists and engineers at universities and elsewhere outside the industry complain of the near impossibility of communicating with industry employees on what is presumably a common dedication to save lives. The corporate plea of proprietary data is an excuse, not a reason. The carmakers want no public knowledge of their safety work or neglect thereof. Such knowledge might raise expectations or ignite indignations for greater safety.

The automakers are spending a pittance on safety research and development. In the area of vehicle aerodynamics and handling analysis — a subject of growing urgency as vehicle speeds increase—there is deep nelgect and shocking theoretical ignorance. Of more immediate interest is the flimsy allocation of human and financial resources to crashworthiness research.

The auto industry is utterly devoid of any measure of humility so necessary for internal regeneration. Never once in response to public questioning has any company representative admitted the dangerous connection between auto exhaust and driver safety. Yet experts such as Harvard's Ross McFarland and Cal Tech's Arlie Haagen-Smit have warned about the fatigue and nausea-inducing impact of carbon monoxide levels not infrequent in heavy urban or suburban freeway traffic. In addition, reduced visibility from automotive pollution has led to temporary closing down of turnpikes. Those who still prefer the voluntary approach should remember the action by Ford Motor Co. which took off on many of its models the blowby devices that curtailed crankcase emissions in 1964 after it had agreed to put them on earlier in order to avoid legislation. It took these devices off without notifying car buyers or the government, and did not reinstall them until

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

notified by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The hardening of the corporate arteries even extends to an adamant refusal to recognize the dangers of pointed ornaments, dagger fins and the sharp edges to many of the nearly 500,000 pedestrians struck each year by motor vehicles. Still the juggernaut plunges ahead. Consider the description of the 1966 Tornado—a brand new muscle-car — by Hubert Luckett, executive editor of *Popular Science;* "Functionally, the front bumper design is insane. It shares this monstrous affront to commonsense with several Detroit cars this year. A massive wedgelike projection on the sides would be murderous to a hapless pedestrian unfortunate enough to step in its path. And it could easily hang up on a guardrail post, turning an otherwise minor mishap into a disaster." A brand new car with old line negligence.

By its repeated behavior, the auto industry has shown that public pressure is the only stimulus to which it grudgingly and slowly responds. Auto companies opposed seat belts for years, ridiculing their proponents, then finally offered them as optional extra cost equipment and in January 1964, under pressure of enacted legislation, decided to make them standard equipment. The industry rigged odometers — an inherently deceptive practice which fleeced and misinformed motorists about rental fees, warranties, trade-in, wear and gas mileage—until the National Bureau of Standards proved an average overregistration in mileage by some 3.5 per cent. Caught in the act, the industry relented to new standards but only after making sure they were still inadequate. The point is that there is never any punishment or deterrent to such behavior, as there would be for individuals.

In recent months, the auto companies, moving as a coalition through their trade body, the Automobile Manufacturers Association, and their technical servant, the Society of Automotive Engineers, are forging new institutions and new industry-wide unanimities to stall or fight off the increasingly focused expression of the motorist's need for greater vehicle safety.

Against such a background of industry practice and policy, the federal government must take a decisive role. This does not mean that the federal government should preempt the field entirely from the states. It does mean that the various endeavors undertaken by public authorities be analyzed to determine which level of government is best equipped to have the particular responsibility. No longer can we afford to repeat the general invocation — so beloved by the traffic safety establishment—that "the primary responsibility for traffic safety is vested in the states." In questioning the fervent advocates of this article of faith, I have never been able to derive any revealed justification other than it was so in the days of William Howard Taft. But these advocates have their undisclosed reasons that all lead to protecting the status quo dedicated to the proposition that traffic safety is chiefly driver behavior and may the special interests be protected forever after.

In refusing the repeated requests to appear at an executive hearing in Iowa sent them by Attorney General Lawrence F. Scalise, the four auto companies complained of the burden it would be to appear at such state hearings and informed him that the AMA representative would be there only.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The AMA representative, Karl Richards, then stood up and declined to answer any technical questions or any questions dealing with corporate policy or specific cars. Iowa's right to know about the safety of the products that its people purchase and drive by the hundreds of thousands every year was squelched by an industry that was bigger than that state.

I view the task of the federal government as one of implementing a public policy for automobile safety that brings into operation the scientific and engineering talents and resources of the nation. It is encouraging to note that, at long last, the thinking and research done by a group of bright, dedicated civil servants in the Bureau of Public Roads' Office of Research and Development is beginning to find verbal receptiveness among the Department of Commerce's top policymakers.

Last November, Secretary of Commerce John T. Connor, was quite emphatic in drawing upon the findings of the Bureau of Public Roads:

"The fact is that most drivers, most of the time, are driving near the limits of their ability—considering the complexity of the traffic situation and of the driving task. * * * In our pursuit of safety the emphasis on remedial engineering rather than reprimand represents an important breakthrough."

The next step from such an understanding would seem to be to construct a scale of policy priorities aimed at reducing automobile casualties. Two operating principles of a profoundly proven nature in many fields of man-machine interaction are crucial here: (1) Safety measures that do not rely on or require people's voluntary and repeated cooperation are more effective and more reliable than those that do. (2) The sequence of events that leads to an accident-injury can be broken by engineering measures even before there is a complete understanding of the casual chain. Thus, for example, improved braking systems that do not fade or lock, safer tires, safer handling characteristics, and the elimination of vehicle-induced glare and carbon monoxide reduce the strains on the driving task and the risk of accidents. And most important, a crash-resistant automobile which protects the occupants from collision forces can make accidents safer, if not altogether safe. Indeed, since present technology is capable of producing cars economically, conveniently and attractively to protect occupants without significant injury in collisions up to and over 50 m.p.h. (depending on the nature of the collision), and since at least three-fourths of all deaths and serious injuries occur at impact speeds under 50 m.p.h., the course of action for rational men to pursue is to have such automobiles built.

The plain fact is that it is faster, cheaper and more enduring to build operationally safe and crashworthy automobiles that will prevent death and injury than to build a policy around the impossible goal of having drivers behave perfectly at all times under all conditions in the operation of a basically unsafe vehicle and under often treacherous highway conditions. We can try ad infinitum to get all 95 million drivers to learn, and instantly act on this learning, that panic brake applications in certain emergency situations, particularly on wet surfaces, are likely to lock the brakes with consequent loss of control of the vehicle. Or we can simply apply what is presently known and build automobiles with antilocking braking systems.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yet instead of a rigorous analysis of priorities so as to get the fastest and most efficient safety output from given inputs, we hear the incantations about "balanced traffic safety programs" or that it is really all "the nut behind the wheel." The best that can be said about such thinking is that it is primitive. A civilized society should want to protect even the nut behind the wheel from paying the ultimate penalty for a moment's carelessness, not to mention protecting the innocent people who get in his way. These and other similar handy mottoes are part of a self-serving ideology — there is no better word for it — of traffic safety strongly developed and perpetuated by the automobile industry in order to divert the public's gaze from the role of vehicle design.

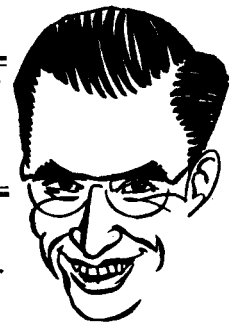
Here we arrive at the nub of the problem in traffic safety. The barriers to progress and innovation are not knowledge gaps but the overabundance of special interests which the scientists euphemistically call "nontechnical obstacles" to change. These special interests tragically have included the very groups which could have been the classic countervailing and disciplining powers on the auto industry—namely, the casualty insurance industry and the American Automobile Assoc.

Until the suffocating hand of the so-called national traffic safety organizations and their omnipresent automotive patron is lifted once and for all by an aroused citizenry and government, the critical priorities will not be translated into action.

(Last of two installments)

The McDowell Papers

By Charles McDowell, Jr.



WASHINGTON

ALFRED BEXELIUS, THE Ombudsman of Sweden, was in town the other day to tell a Senate subcommittee about his job as cutter of red tape and righter of wrongs for citizens caught in the toils of bureaucracy.

Senator Edward V. Long (D-Mo.), who invited him to Washington, thought the time had come for the United States government to consider creating the office of ombudsman. The idea seemed to go over well at the exploratory hearing held by the Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative Practice and Procedure, although one denizen of the federal establishment was heard to say to a friend, "It would be like putting a fox in the chicken coop."

Sweden has had an ombudsman since 1809. Finland, Denmark, Norway and New Zealand have ombudsmen, and Great Britain is considering taking the plunge.

The ombudsman is a powerful, free-wheeling representative of the people in their encounters with governmental inefficiency, negligence, arbitrariness and obfuscation. Although nine out of 10 complaints to Ombudsman Bexelius turn out to be groundless, he says, his investigations at least reassure people that somebody is looking out for them.

The appeal of the ombudsman concept is obvious. Having given some thought to it, we are prepared to predict that Congress will enact an ombudsman law.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Members of Congress themselves are now saddled with many ombudsman duties; their offices are always busy with the problems of individual constituents. Most members will be glad to have an independent agency take over some of this work, particularly the problems of people embroiled in governmental red tape.

The new agency will be called something like the Office of Ombudsman and Perfection of Service. Or the Office of Ombudsman and Problem Solving. Or the Office of Ombudsman and Pettifoggery Surveillance. Anyway, the natural alphabetical designation is OOPS.

Knowing Congress, we doubt that it would settle for one ombudsman to run an agency as important as OOPS. A board of seven ombudsmen is more like it. The board, appointed by the President with the consent of the Senate, will need examiners, investigators and a fairly large staff. In time, of course, it will want to establish regional offices.

To enlist the aid of OOPS an aggrieved citizen will merely fill out and file a three-page form in triplicate. If this complaint is found to be meritorious, the citizen will be asked to specify full details on a four-page form in quadruplicate.

If an examiner finds that this detailed complaint raises a presumption of certifiable error, a copy will be forwarded to the Civil Service Commission, which will have 90 days to file an answer.

When a copy of the answer has been received by the complainant and he still is not satisfied, he will be allowed to file an official petition for review, in quadruplicate on IBM cards available at all second-class post offices, after a cooling-off period of 60 days.

If the petition is approved, investigators will look into the case and the petitioner's income tax returns, and will make a written report to an examiner, who may or may not hold a hearing but must make a recommendation to the board of ombudsmen prior to the beginning of the next fiscal year.

If a majority of the board votes to sustain the citizen's case, OOPS will move swiftly to cut through the red tape and right the wrong whatever it may be.

Copyright, Newsday, 1966

Lyndon's Pet Hawk

By the Devil's Advocate

PORE OLE LYNDON, he's been sobbing out his 100 percent American soul to Congressmen, visiting Shriners and newsmen. The trouble is them hawks is pushing him mighty painful; they want him to bomb Haiphong and Hanoi and China.

Just who these hawks are is a mite bit mysterious. Respectable military columnists tell us the Joint Chiefs of Staff are not the varmints. The National Opinion Research Center reports only 6 percent of Americans take a "consistent hawk position." Thus, Q.E.D., the White House must have its own private supply of hawks.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This column is able to report exclusively the identity of pore ole Lyndon's pet hawk, and even arranged a surreptitious interview with him. He was discovered, never mind how, chained to the water pipe in the old office of McGeorge Bundy in the basement of the West Wing of the White House. His name is Colonel Horatio Hardshell Hawke (Ret.), Quartermaster Corps. He is the genius behind the K-ration and powdered eggs, and won the Legion of Merit and Iron Cross with palms for his distribution of Hershey bars at the time of the Berlin Crisis. He is a bachelor of advanced years, has an eerie cast in one eye, and never learned to tango.

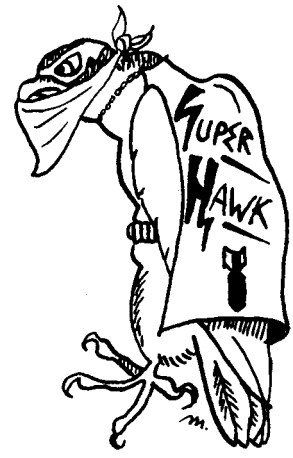
"I was a lonely child," he explained simply, "and never learned any affection for my fellow humans. My sole companion was a rat named Oscar. I joined the ROTC to wear a uniform and give orders. Unhappily, I have an optic problem and during target practice riddled the Mayor's cow. You must believe me, I was not aiming at the cow. I thought I had the Mayor in my sights. My opportunity came to volunteer during the late unpleasantness with Mr. Hitler and Mr Tojo, and since I was the night manager of a White Tower in Indianapolis, Ind., I was assigned to preparing rations for the men."

"This is all very interesting, Colonel," this correspondent replied a bit impatiently. "But why do you want to bomb Haiphong and Hanoi and the Chinese nuclear installations?"

"Isn't that what he wants me to say," Hawke replied in surprise. "I certainly had that impression when Bill Moyers brought me here. My instruction was to howl through the public address system whenever a red light flashed, 'Bomb Hanoi!' They haven't changed their minds, have they?"

"What I mean to say is, what are your individual convictions, Colonel Hawke?"

"The less human beings the more food for us rats." He laughed in em-



barassment. "You'll have to excuse me. Sometimes I identify myself with Oscar. He was my dear friend, you know." He fished about in his pockets. "Let's see, there was a memo Moyers left with me. Left over from General MacArthur and the Korean War, I believe. Ah yes. The bombing of Manchuria, I mean, Hanoi and Haiphong, is absolutely necessary to save the lives of American boys fighting bravely and to crush forever the dragon of Communism lashing its tail across the Pacific to our own cottages and penthouses. Without this strategic action, we may well be fighting the Chinese on the levees of the Mississippi River and have our wives violated by the slit-eyed monsters."

The red light flashed, and Colonel Hawke obediently screamed, "Bomb Hanoi!"

"What's that all about?" your correspondent inquired.

"I understand he's briefing a gang of governors, and it's time for the sobbing scene." Colonel Hawke said, spraying his throat. "We got the bankers coming in at 3 and Walter Lippmann at 5."

CREDITS

The character sketches are drawn by John Perts, of Suffolk, Va.

Bob and Susie Sanderson, of Bristol, R. I., helped — as usual — with the production of this issue.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yale Discovers America

THE VINLAND MAP AND THE TARTAR RELATION. By R. A. Skelton, Thomas E. Marston, and George D. Painter for the Yale University Library. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965. 269 pp. $15.

WHEN, ON THE EVE of last Columbus Day, the Yale University Library sprang on the world the news that it had owned for more than seven years a pre-Columbian map showing portions of America, it was rightly regarded as (in Yale's phrase) "the most significant map discovery of this or any other century." It was not the first, but the most tangible and irrefutable, proof of the Norse discovery of the New World. More conservatively viewed, it is the oldest surviving map of the North Atlantic and of any part of America.

The map turned up in a manuscript account of a 13th-century mission to the Mongols. By an astronomical stroke of luck, it was later determined that both map and manuscript belonged with another manuscript, coincidentally acquired by Yale *after* the map discovery. This latter was a portion of a vast medieval reference work, the *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais (c. 1190-c. 1264), which the map was apparently drawn to illustrate.

It is an otherwise undistinguished map, a sketchy delineation of the flat, elliptical world of the pre-Columbian era. But in its upper left-hand corner, clearly outside the elliptical framework, are a depiction of Greenland that is centuries ahead of its time, and, to the west of it, a large three-lobed island labelled "Island of Vinland, discovered by the companions Byarnus and Leiphus." North of this island is a long inscription:

By God's will, after a long voyage from the island of Greenland southward toward the most distant remaining parts of the western ocean sea, sailing southward amidst the ice, the companions Byarnus and Leiphus Erissonius discovered a new land, extremely fertile and even having vines, which island they named Vinland. Henricus, legate of the Apostolic See and bishop of Greenland and the neighboring regions, arrived in this truly vast and very rich land, in the name of Almighty God, in the last year of our most blessed father Pascal, remained a long time in both summer and winter, and later returned northeastward toward Greenland and then proceeded in most humble obedience to the will of his superiors.

"Byarnus" and "Leiphus Erissonius" can scarcely be other than Bjarni Herjolfsson and Leif Ericsson, who in the Icelandic sagas are given separate credit for the discovery of a "Wineland" to the west about 1000 A.D. "Henricus" must be Erik Gnupsson, an apostolic legate of Pope Pascal II. Erik's voyage to Vinland is recorded in Icelandic annals under the year 1121 (though Pascal died in 1118).

The manuscript is undated, but internal evidence—handwriting, parchment, paper, and binding—place it in the Upper Rhineland about 1440. It is conjectured that the map and text were copied at the Vatican Council of Basel (1431-49), where churchmen from all over the world convened.

Yale's public-relations office put the world's press on the alert with press releases postdated October 11, and on that day its Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library threw a catered, black-tie reception for the unveiling of both the map and a handsome edition, produced by a team of scholars, of the contents of the manuscript in which the map had been found.

The reaction on Columbus Day was intense in other ways than Yale expected. Academic joy was freely expressed, but was drowned in a tidal wave of vitriol the likes of which probably no scholar since Darwin

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has experienced. Italians and Italian-Americans, who presumably had the most face to lose, were outraged. According to the *New York Times* for October 13, the Italian Historical Society of New York "invited four Italian universities to 'participate in a polemic' against the findings of 'one university called Yale.' " An official of its Boston counterpart vowed to "drive Yale to the wall." In an Italian section of Boston, a Columbus Day enthusiast chalked on a wall: "Leif Ericson is a fink." A Cambridge, Mass., city councillor of Italian descent, a noted Harvard-baiter, demanded that that college sever diplomatic relations with Yale. But all this, compared to the Spanish reaction, was utter aplomb.

The Spanish press exploded in a paroxysm of fury simultaneously directed at Yale (for trying to one-up Spain) and Italy (for claiming the Genoa-born Columbus as Italian). A leading Madrid daily accused Yale of "necrophagy" (carrion-feeding), and blasted the timing of its press releases as "a gesture of methodical and incredible belligerence, designed, if possible, to pulverize Spanish glory for the discovery of the New World."

"Just about everyone jumped on Yale," the *Times* commented while the rhetoric was still cannonading. Hence the perceptible note of startled apprehension and weariness in the comment to a *Times* questioner by Chester Kerr, director of the Yale University Press: "The whole thing is getting run on a kind of circus. There's too much hullabaloo and we don't want to contribute any more to it."

No one stopped to consider that Yale just might have thought it appropriate to announce this clinching vindication of Leif Ericsson on Leif Ericsson Day, which was set at October 11 by President Johnson in 1964. There were subsequent cries that Yale had acted out of a disingenuous commercialism; these criers pointed to the $15 price of the map edition and the probability that virtually every library in the country would buy a copy. At least one person solemnly averred that the heavy publicity was the White Anglo-Saxon Protestants' way of trumpeting their now-proven historical primacy in the New World over the socially unsavory Italians.

But the academic community, the scholars in the fields most affected by the new discovery, paid scant attention to the hullabaloo. Those who commented on it at all restricted themselves to slapping Yale on the wrist for demeaning the dignity of Academia. Said Samuel Eliot Morison in the *Times Book Review* of Sunday, November 7: ". . . . the publicity material on this book, cannily issued by Yale University Press at the approach of Columbus Day . . . has gravely distorted what the manuscript tells us and is unworthy of a sound scholarly production." But a reputable university like Yale could never act from motives of real cupidity — could it?

Vacuum-packed Research

It was not long before some of the more cogent complaints of scholars were pointing back to that same question. To begin with, why had Yale kept the map under cover for seven years? The answer adumbrated by the introduction to the book is this: The map's delineation of Greenland was so good that its owners feared it might be a forgery. Most strikingly, it is depicted as an island, whereas all other maps and geographical writings regarded it as a peninsula right into the 19th century. So the scholars embarked on seven years' worth of what the press releases like to call "detective work" in order to prove its authenticity.

To put the best possible interpretation on this *modus operandi*, we turn to the October, 1965, issue of *Horizon*, a glossy periodical which dresses up American history in an eminently marketable format. By some miracle of publication, this issue contains a 14-page article on the map, consisting primarily of excerpts from the just-published book. *Horizon* editor Oliver Jensen says of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

map's finders: "In true scholarly fashion . . . they did not fly into print, and instead, set about a long and arduous research . . . In their work, these investigators called on many experts in as many specialties, until the project became a truly large and international one."

Both statements are unconsciously ironic. First, the length of time that the map was kept top secret is quite at odds with "true scholarly fashion." The most fruitful, and traditional, way to assess the authenticity of such a discovery is to launch it into the mainstream of scholarly discourse and see whether it sinks or swims. A particularly apposite example is the Icelandic sagas which previously were our most concrete information on the Norse discovery. These have proven their mettle primarily by emerging a little bit stronger from every scholarly challenge. If an archivist today turned up a new saga manuscript concerning the discovery of Vinland, scholars would be justifiably angry if he sat on it for the better part of a decade while hedging it round with academic fortifications and armor.

Secondly, as for the "many experts in as many specialties," the foreword to the map edition lists exactly six people in addition to the discoverer and the editors — two British, one Yale — and Yale personnel directly in charge of publishing it) who were "in on" the discovery at any time before the instant of publication. Only three of these appear to have had any active part in the research. With this kind of exclusiveness, it is nearly meaningless to name the leading scholars excluded from the "truly large and international project;" but, to take some examples at random: Samuel Eliot Morison and J. H. Parry (author of *The Age of Reconnaissance*) two distinguished historians of European Atlantic exploration and oceanic history; Gwyn Jones, most recent surveyor of all the evidence on the Norse discovery of Iceland, Greenland, and America (*The Norse Atlantic Saga*, Oxford, 1964) and the head of Yale's own German Department, Konstantin Reichardt, who has written and lectured on Norse exploration, but who got his first knowledge of the map through the New York *Times*. (Apparently senior Yale faculty rated not even the post-dated press releases.)

Horizon editor Jensen must have it on faith from the map's editors (perhaps, like most of his account, verbatim from theirs) that they "called on many experts in as many specialties." If they "called on" a single competent Scandinavianist, he has left no trace in the book, which displays an almost crippling lack of first-hand knowledge of the Old Norse sources relating to Vinland. Mr. Skelton constantly refers to the "Icelandic records" and "old geographical texts" in Old Norse, and declares them to be the sources most relevant to the map; but he admits (p. 209) to making only a "cursory survey" of them, and there is no evidence that he ever consulted them in the original. Indeed, he is at times admittedly dependent upon second- and third-hand intermediaries for important information: his knowledge of the important Icelandic annals comes from an 1890 work by a man who thought that Karlsefni, an Icelander who followed Leif, landed at Cambridge, Mass. He unaccountably fails to include the sagas in a list of "textual sources on which the mapmaker could have drawn," though he elsewhere avers that the outline of Vinland was probably derived from a narrative. The confident tone of many of his pronouncements, especially on the continuity of Icelandic-Greenlandic contact with Vinland, fails to account for the uncertainty of our knowledge about such contact — because of the fantastic mortality rate of Icelandic records (90%, according to a native estimate). Yet he consistently speaks as if it were positively *known* that there was no contact with Vinland after 1030. And it is not safe, or even correct, to say that "all records (concerning Vinland) are silent after the first quarter of the twelfth cen-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tury," when the manuscripts in which the Vinland sagas survive date from the fourteenth.

Furthermore, considering the typographical resources of the Yale University Press displayed elsewhere in the book, the citations from Old Norse are a botch — a hodgepodge of Danicisms, wildly inconsistent use of diacritics, and outright typographical errors which any student with a semester's acquaintance with the language could correct. To cite just a few of the score or so of these mis-transliterations: Ari Frode, p. 139; Vesterbygds Fiord, 194; Langenes, 169; Joldu-hlaup, 169; Sjaefellsnes, 170; Bjarmeland, 173; Reykjarnes, 170; Helgesson, 226, and Skardsa with the acute accent twice placed on the wrong vowel (192, 200). The union of Iceland with Norway is placed a year too late, in 1263.

Faced with errors like these, one thinks sorrowfully of the outstanding Scandinavianists who have died since 1957 — Didrik Seip, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and Alf Sommerfelt spring to mind — who might have shed some light on the map out of their unpublished knowledge.

Academic Overkill

It seems, then, that the editors of the Vinland Map can be accused of unprofessional conduct, of being selfish with their good fortune. Instead of inviting scholars in — public announcements aside — to assist and test their research, in "true scholarly fashion," they chose to work seven years in a vacuum, apparently on a strategy of academic overkill: Hit 'em with everything you can assemble and they'll be too stunned to resist.

Intellectually, the more serious charge is that they jettisonned scholarly perspective because of their tight security. The thin substantiation of the paleographical evidence, all-important for dating the manuscript, has already been challenged by G. R. Crone in a review in *Encounter*. Then there is the irksome host of major and minor errors concerning things Scandinavian.

OPPORTUNITIES

Automobiles for sale: 1965 Dodge Coronet, $1500; 1965 Ford Custom, $1500. Car will be delivered right to your door with clear title. Sam McVicker, 641 Franklin St., Johnstown, Pa.

Singer sewing machine: $29.95. Electric range: $10.95. Spinet piano and bench: $49.95. All merchandise brand new. Money back guarantee. McVicker's, 641 Franklin St., Johnstown, Pa.

Roth violin. Excellent sound quality and condition. With new case. Price: $120.00 or best offer. Joel D. Hencken, 19198 Hartwell, Detroit, Mich.

AIR MAIL EDITION

The Idler can be received via air mail at the following rates:

United States: $5.00 per year.

Canada and Central America: $7.00 per year.

Europe and South America: $8.00 per year.

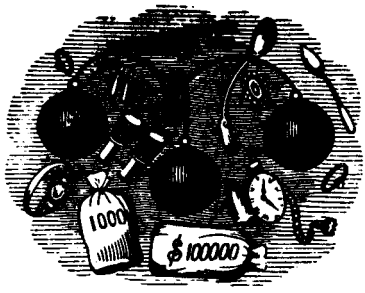
Africa, Soviet Union, and Asia: $9.00 per year.

Current subscribers wishing to change to the air mail edition for the remaining issues of their subscription are invited to write us for rate information.

The editors, particularly the Englishmen involved, Skelton and Painter, are probably not to be held at fault for this unprofessional conduct. They have produced what is other-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OPPORTUNITIES



Mediaeval brass rubbings. Fine art print of the monumental brass of Henry Sever (died 1471) Chaplain to Henry VII, Chancellor of Oxford University, from Merton College, Oxford. 60" x 21" gold on blue or scarlet. $15. Write RUBBINGS, c/o IDLER.

Family size swimming pool. Holds 1,200 gallons of water. $47.50. Money back guarantee. McVickers, 641 Franklin St., Johnstown, Pa.

DEALERS IN

NUTRITIOUS MEATS

Fill your freezer with organically raised Angus beef from registered herd, Maine, twelfth year. Shipped frozen in oven-ready, family size packages. From cattle raised in natural environment free of pesticides, chemical fertilizers and toxic substances. Minimum shipment: one cubic-foot carton. Write BEEF, c/o Idler.

New Republic, new, renewal, 25 issues, $3.00. Newsweek, 44 issues, $4.80, Progressive, 10 issues, $2.50. Pollack's Publishers Service, Little Silver, New Jersey.

A Love Affair With the Piano! Master lessons, through correspondence. 33 years experience. Beginners. Rusty intermediates. Dusty advanced. Age no barrier. Cameo Studio Dept. 9, 25 Cameo Rd., Levittown, Pa. 19057

Sperrhake Harpsichord. 8' and 4' registers. For immediate delivery. $1150. Robert S. Taylor, 8710 Garfield St., Bethesda, Md.

One thousand brand new uncirculated silver dollars minted in the 1800's. $3 each. First check for $3000 gets entire lot. Full refund if you return shipment. Sam McVicker, 641 Franklin St., Johnstown, Pa.

Back issues of THE IDLER, when available, at these rates: single copies: 35c; three or more: 25c each; ten or more: 20c each. Idler 125 Fifth St. NE, Washington 2, D.C.

Plan to spend a part of your summer camping on Casco Bay, Me. Attractively maintained sites with excellent view. Low rates. Write CAMPING, c/o Idler.

BOOKPLATES

FREE CATALOG

Designs for every age and taste. Special designing too.

Address:

ANTIOCH BOOKPLATE CO.

Yellow Springs 2, Ohio

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wise a first-rate synthesis of prodigious learning and labor. The manuscript is examined with a completeness that shows understandable overtones of relish. The authors submit to scrutiny the watermarks in the paper, the heads of the brass nails in the binding, the embossing of the leather cover; cracks in the cover are meticulously described, leaves of manuscript measured to the millimeter, and parchment analyzed so minutely that it is reported which side of which page once had hair on it. The edition is — as is proper — elaborate as a reliquary.

In their analysis, the authors are usually cautious and tentative, keeping explicitly in mind the assumptions underlying their conclusions, and frequently reminding the reader of them. The book is written in an elegantly correct scholarly style, colored only a little by the excitement of discovery, that is a joy to read. Marston provides a fascinating anecdotal introduction about the discovery of the map. In short, the scholars seem to have worked with a conscientiousness entirely at variance with the unconscionable flackery of their final presentation. The evidence, skimpy though it is, points elsewhere for the decision on the *modus operandi*: In the direction of the Yale library and public relations office.

Hi, Peoria!

Look at it this way. The Vinland Map cost Yale a lot of money — in Morison's words: "a sum which, the publicity coyly hints, falls not far short of a million dollars." Is it anything more than good economics for a university to get its money's worth from such an investment? Even the price of the volume is evidence of this strategy — though for precisely the opposite reasons from those believed by the initial grumblers. The sumptuous book produced by Yale is easily a bargain at $15; yet its wholesale price is only $9.75, suggesting that the University Press has tooled up for a long production run, anticipating a windfall, and is playing a prime part in Yale's determination to get its money back.

As for Yale's choice of sharers of its secret — well, *Horizon* is an excellent source of money and publicity. *Horizon's* readers have money. The readers of the scholarly journals in which most of the world's knowledge is advanced do not. There is certainy no windfall for Yale, either in money or in publicity impact, in releasing the map through the "true scholarly" channels.

Furthermore, it is fairly obvious that the map is regarded as a financial and social magnet for the Yale Library. Its coming-out party bore more of the earmarks of a social event than of a great occurrence in intellectual history. Scarcely a recognizable scholar was in evidence, and the evening was dominated by an air of amateur theatrical triumph and the personality of the rich New Havenite — a "friend of the Yale Library" sort of thing. The two most frequent comments floating through the air were: "Did you know that (my son Lawrence, my daughter Sarah) is going to (Yale, Sarah Lawrence) this Fall?" and "Do *you* understand what this is all about?"

Then there are the relentless plugs for the Yale Library. Most of the press accounts of the map discovery included the following paragraphs:

"Mr. (Alexander) Vietor (Yale curator of maps) said the map 'is the greatest treasure of the Yale map collection,' which includes the famous Martelus map of 1489, depicting the world at the time of Columbus before his voyages of discovery."

"James Tannis, librarian at Yale, has called the Vinland map 'the most exciting single acquisition of the Yale library in modern times, exceeding in significance even Yale's Gutenberg Bible and the Bay Psalm Book.'"

They remind one of the guy in a crowd with the "Hi, Peoria!" placard who tries to horn in on a TV camera's field of vision.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

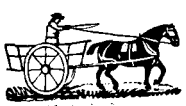
Ironically enough, the Yale strategy has not worked. Morison concurred in the editors' verdict of authenticity while registering his procedural grumbles. But Crone's slightly later review concluded (though on rather crotchety grounds) by calling the map a poor job of cartography, certainly post-dating 1486, and "probably post-Columbian." An Old Norse scholar at another Ivy League college termed the map edition "a botch from start to finish," complaining particularly of the poor quality of the photographic reproductions. Another thought the editors' seven-year secrecy "rather stupid."

Still, it seems as if there were considerations other than thematic appropriateness for the release of this dramatic news on the day before Columbus Day: considerations of money and publicity, and of the prosperity of the Yale library in future contributions, both financial and bibliophilic. Yale decided to milk its good fortune for all it was worth.

It is this sort of irksome performance that makes conscientious scholars cavil and crab and get a reputation for ill-tempered pedantry. The ringmasters would prefer such scholars to admire the drama of new knowledge and ignore the questionable tactics in its bringing-forth. True enough, one expects scholarly discoveries to be popularized and exploited, however objective and honest the scholar himself remains; this in itself is usually just an amusing spectacle. But it is saddening to see the discoverers themselves yoked so tightly to the popularization and exploitation.

May they, as scholars, survive whatever backlash the map flap occasions. As for Yale, it pulled the rubber band too hard on its publicity slingshot. Perhaps it was poetic justice that the band snapped in its face.

By Gandalf



Mightier Than Any Sword

By A. H. Berzen

AS CONSUMERS, WE have been counted, measured, categorized; by geographical region, economic level, cultural strata. But despite the Madison Avenue prospectors, I offer a modest survey of my own.

As a nation, we Americans fear, above all else, inky fingers. We are quick to support any pen manufacturer who promises to deliver us from that particular catastrophe. Filling a fountain pen, once a simple affair, has become an engineering feat.

For some time now, I have been followed by pens. At every turn, I am inundated by a cascade of ball point, stub point, and no point. While perusing magazines or window shopping, I am hemmed in by pens or illustrations of them. To escape their tantalizing pursuit, I am forever yielding to the copywriter's admonition to "rush out and buy."

I have pens that write with ink. Pens that are loaded, like a gun, with cartridges; pens that must be immersed completely and pens to be held above the bottle, to sort of sniff the ink. Pens constructed like a battleship, a submarine, a suspension bridge. Pens that are silent and pens that burp. Homely pens that charm me with their plain folksiness and cost a few cents, and formal pens of precious metal that are downright snobbish.

Pens run wild through my desk, across my bureau, in my closets. I own pens molded to fit my hand, my fingers, my wrist; pens that write with me, following my every movement unfalteringly, and pens calculated to change my writing habits, leading me (gently, though firmly) to better penmanship.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lest some reader accuse Mr. Berzen of literary hyperbole, we present the following as supporting evidence. It is from a letter to the president of the Fisher Pen Co. from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration:

DEAR MR. FISHER: *As you are* aware, our Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston, Tex., has been testing your new model AG-7 pens which have aluminum pistons separating the gas from the ink reservoir. The results of these tests. as reported to this office on September 22, 1965, were quite favorable, and I quote from the report the following statements:

"The modified pens were received, checked for oxygen compatibility, and subsequently used in a simulated spacecraft cabin environment.

"The oxygen compatibility was confirmed by rupturing the ink cartridge and placing the ink in a watch glass and exposing it to 100 percent oxygen. The oxygen soak was at various pressures from 3 to 15 pounds per square inch absolute for a period of 1 hour. At the end of the 1 hour soak, no noticeable oxidation had occurred. The ink, still in the oxygen, was placed in the presence of an open flame, and it was determined that it would not support combustion.

"The AG-7 pens performed excellently in all positions. The pens were examined after the test and no excessive oozing was apparent."

I used to manage, for weeks at a time, to write nothing more profound than a note to my milkman. As I recall, crayon was adequate; it added just the touch of simple, nut-like, down-to-earth goodness he had come to expect from me, and my message was only slightly illegible.

But now I use pens that write in a dozen different colors, either singly or all at once. Pens that write wet and dry dry (I could hardly wait for those) and pens that write dry and dry wet. Pens that write under water and under sand; pens that require no "changing" for ten thousand words (or it is miles?), and pens that need an ink bottle constantly.

Long pens that widen to a bulge, and short pens that taper to a point; pens that demand a complementary pencil to enhance their appearance. Pens that come in sets of three, six, ten; pens in different flavors. Pens that scrawl faintly under the most forceful pressure and pens that gush at the sight of paper.

Pens that write on cloth, on steel, on ice; pens that can climb, swim, leap. Pens that reflect my discriminating taste and pens that offer me "full protection" (against what, I am not certain). Pens that display an independence, if not arrogance, and write only when it suits them. Stubborn pens that pout and go dry upon approaching a dotted line. Pens that mysteriously tilt and dislodge themselves from the pocket.

Pens that mock me and deliberately favor salesmen whose persuasions I hope to avoid by a suddenly dry pen. Conversely, when I want someone's signature on a paper for my benefit, the pen will turn its head and abandon me.

I have pens that give me a sense of well-being, of security, of worldliness. Pens that offer a challenge and stir up my pioneering spirit, recalling my heritage. Pens guaranteed to wear as long, as durably as an old friend, and pens that began to balk while being wrapped by the sales clerk.

I had finally, with much fidgeting, reconciled myself to the dip-and-write approach. But a recent assault on my pen-vulnerability threatens. The ads now tell me to forget all my previous so-called revolutionary pens for some-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Corner Aphorist

By Sam A. Darcy

☞Our Cousin Barnegat was in to see us. He used to be a chicken farmer, but he gave it up. He suffered for them.

"Do you know," he often said, "that that big egg comes from such a small hole? It must be terribly painful."

Everytime the chicken laid an egg Cousin Barnegat had labor pains. And he had two thousand chickens!

He wanted us to help him write a letter to the President.

"The President is always praying for peace," he said. "Praying is all right, but that's not the idea. When I pray for the Lord to send me a turkey, nothing happens. But when I pray for the Lord to send me after a turkey, He gets results. You write old Lnydon along that line."

☞Sandy Koufax will get about $120,000 for the 1966 season. That will be more salary than President Johnson gets. It may prove that an arm thrower can earn more than an arm twister. Sandy's fringe benefits aren't bad either. He doesn't have to work on Yom Kipper.

☞Looking back on Hubert Humphrey's noisy tour of the Far East reminds us of a Civil War story for which we are indebted to the noted writer Burke Davis.

The biggest man-made explosion in history was planned for the demise of the ship *Louisiana*, set adrift with 215 tons of powder in an effort to destroy Fort Fisher, near Wilmington, North Carolina. The scheme conceived by General Butler, failed because the explosion was wrongly directed and the "H-bomb" of the Civil War became a dud.

When Fort Fisher was finally taken by the North, a Confederate prisoner was asked about the effect of the bast. He said, "It was awful, it woke up every man in the fort."

☞Excerpt from A. W. E. Hutton & Co. stock commentary: "At Wednesday's lows, the DJ Industrials had cancelled out the greater part of the rally from 905.40 to 902.92. It would not be difficult to violate the old bottom." For goodness sakes, whose?

☞Having visited Greece, we were enthused to study Greek. The book we bought is called *Introduction to Greek*, published by the Harvard University Press. The following is an opening paragraph:

> *There are three accents . . . word bearing the acute upon the ultima is known as an oxytone, one with the acute upon the penult as a paroxytone, one with the acute on the antepenult as a properispomenon. These terms, though formidable, will save much laborious periphrasis.*

Not only have we abandoned Greek, but we hereby ask the Supreme Court to look into this matter for possible Aesopian pornography.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thing called "air jet exhaust."

Forget my other pens? Might as well counsel a hypochondriac to clear his medicine chest.

I have given, and received, countless pens as gifts, and I suppose they are a necessary adjunct to living; in a class, say, with cotton candy and umbrellas.

But if the pen makers don't rein in just a bit, there's one man who's going back to the quill. And who knows — it may start a trend.

(Copyright 1966, A. H. Berzen)

ART'S GALLERY

by Art Finley

A MARTINI with a Maraschino CHERRY?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letter from Lorelei

DEAR SAM

You know, I know what I write amounts to not even a hill of chickenpeas, but I write to keep my brains from falling apart, the wheels from rusting. I don't want to be photographed some day on my way to a rest home clutching a cat they want to take away from me, and looking like having been a half-wit all my life. I saw a picture like this once and I made up my mind never to get like that.

I have planted my garden and fenced it and the nice poultry yard in which I must keep Nasser, the gander, and his henfriends, because otherwise he takes them across the road to the berry patch. He doesn't know that the land isn't mine any more. The cats I can't keep from roaming. They are night hunters, but with all the big security lights around here the night has been destroyed. There wouldn't be any inspiration for Keats or Shelley: the night isn't allowed to veil the ugliness any more.

It's raining. The cats are tearing this house apart. To the younger ones the world is an arena. Oliver, though, is most dignified. He was so even as a baby. Also a loner. He hunts all by himself. He would be an ideal bachelor's pet, only I wouldn't let you have him. I wouldn't even consider letting him be exposed to the immorality of that Washington swamp.

Say, tell Charlie McDowell that my cats watch TV. Two weeks ago I had *Wild Kingdom* on and this here Omar Sharif and his pal Sandy — both yellow and ten months old — were standing before the TV trying to paw the chimp on Dr. Perkins lap. They got so excited they walked all around the TV trying to find it. When Omar was a baby he would sit on my lap before the TV and watch quietly. They look as if they understand. It doesn't make them nervous or blind. When they get tired they walk away or go to sleep. Cats are a lot smarter than people or dogs. Omar even understands French. He knows a can of Nine Lives and tries to open it. You don't have to protect animals from too much TV; better protect the kids. The critters simply walk away when they lose interest. And they do it in a way that expresses contempt for dumb humans who watch even what they don't like.

I am the cat woman. I won't go with the little green men in the flying saucers unless they let me take my pets along — especially Oliver.

I am completely on the outs with the Social Security and Welfare people. I hate the lot of them. I went to see if I could hitch a ride on the S.S. bandwagon, by making payments or something. I was treated like a Neopolitan beggar. I barely managed to get out without slapping the guy's face. A college graduate, no doubt, a dehumanized machine who was only interested in his lunch and getting me to sign up for medicare.

L. B. J. is always taking about having been a teacher. He shows what kind of teachers we turn out here. You should see some of my fan mail from school kids and college boys and girls. One of my young fans who is 15 wrote me this week that they are now starting on World History and the teacher told his pupils that "Napoleon was an interesting little man." That is all he told them 'bout him. Can you imagine that?

Please don't eat the daisies — remain alive and out of reach of the cowboys.

So long,
Lorelei
Federalsburg, Md.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Universal Intelligencer.

A Compendium of Dubious Dispatches from All Over

QUIZ ANSWERS CENSORED

We are sorry to report that most of the correct answers to last month's current events quiz were read by a high Defense Department official at a House appropriations subcommittee hearing and were subsequently deleted from the uncensored record. We are, however, able to print some of the answers received in response to the question: In twenty-five words or less, and without mentioning escalation, aggression, freedom, democracy, determination, peace, untiring, patriotic, or George Kennan, outline a viable solution to the Vietnam problem. Several of the answers ran over the intended length, but then so has the war:

"I believe President Johnson should fly to Rome and join the Pope in issuing a Declaration of the Vatican, in which the President would agree to withdraw American troops from Vietnam and the Pope would agree to support birth control. The President would also agree to use the money saved by withdrawal from Vietnam to set up birth control clinics in the underdeveloped countries and the Pope would promise to provide priests to man them."—from Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Sullivan and their children: George, Sherill, Doris, Robert, Michael, Jenifer, Thomas, Gina, Daphne, Myrtle, and Johnnie, — Dundalk, Md.

"General Maxwell Taylor has often referred to the fact that there are actually 44 different wars going on in Vietnam—one for each of the 44 provinces. Our analyses show that it would be worth considering the practicability of turning over these wars to 44 different agencies. The CIA, the Army, Navy, Agriculture Department, AID, Russell Long's staff and IBM, for example, could each be given one province. A quarterly review could be held and the four least effective agencies could have their wars turned over to the four most effective agencies. By this process of elimination we could eventually determine the best war to fight there and the right agency to fight it."—From E.Z. Research Corp., Red Wing, Minn.

Note to Senator Morse: Your reply was received, due to postal weight limits, in separate packages on April 11, 13, 15, and 23. We'll publish it as soon as we're through reading it.

LIVE COVERAGE OF WAR PREDICTED

Great Advances in TV

ANCHORMAN UNKNOWN

Leonard H. Goldenson, President of the American Broadcasting Co., recently predicted that TV viewers would be able to see the Vietnam war as it happens. He said that satellite communications would make live coverage possible.

The Goldenson statement, it can be reliably reported, has caused a stir in broadcasting circles. The major networks are frantically preparing plans to commence live broadcasts as soon as the satellites permit.

A highly placed source at one of the networks told the **Intelligencer** that the proposed programming of the war posed serious problems that have not yet been ironed out. "We have contractual matters to clear up with both sides in this matter," he said. "For example, we would like to be given the right to declare cease-fires at times that will coordinate with our commercial commitments and station breaks. But I see no reason why Generals Westmoreland and Giap should be any less cooperative about this than the pro football teams have been.

"Then there's the question of an anchorman. We'd like a new face, someone fresh and exciting. This is a young man's war. Trouble with somebody like Walter Cronkite is that he's too much associated with the past. We're toying with the idea of Barry Sadler but we haven't been able to find out what sort of option deal he's got with the Army."

The network official said his company was very excited about prospects for the live coverage. "Think of the guest star possibilities: Dean Martin joins the paratroops, Ensign Parker on Mekong River patrol, all that sort of bit.

"Of course, there are things we'll have to get from the Army cooperation-wise. We've run into a hassle with NASA over the long time it takes them to get one of their rockets off the ground. We keep telling them, 'This is television, baby, you got to make it click,' but they don't seem to understand. It's actually not so bad with the space shots; people have

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

grown to accept the delays. But war's got a different image. Action, you know what I mean? How's it going to sound to hear hours of stuff like:

" 'Well David, while we're waiting for Delta Patrol to be ambushed by the Vietcong, maybe you could give us a report from the network computer on how many Green Berets are going to die today?'

" 'Yes, well on the basis of an analysis of 13 selected villages the best estimate is . . . . .'

"It just doesn't swing. Not only is it bad television, think of what it will do to our fictionized programs about war. People just won't believe it anymore."

The official said his network would also request that the on-scene producer be given the right to redirect troop movements to provide more photogenic coverage and to allow for the exigencies of available light.

There are unconfirmed reports that a high official of CBS News has resigned in protest against CBS's decision not to cover the war live, but to run half hour taped excerpts after the evening news. The CBS decision reportedly was based on the feeling that housewives and not decision-makers would be the ones in front of TV sets during the live coverage and that they would object to having their soap operas interrupted by the war.

The live coverage plan has been sharply criticized in some quarters, but at least one astute observer looks upon it as a good way of bringing an early end to the war. "After all," he told the **Intelligencer,** "how many TV shows last more than a season or two?"

LATEST ADVICES

The President is properly worried about inflation. Just the other day we received an invitation to a $100 a plate political **brunch.**

The Justice Department and the Democrats want to know how Drew Pearson got the information upon which he has based his charges against Senator Dodd. It always strikes us as a little incriminating when people stop asking "Is it true?" and start asking "How'd he find out?"

Mrs. Wallace is running for governor of Alabama, hoping to succeed her husband. Bedfellows make strange politicians.

Say, did you see the story the other day about the New York Herald Journal Tribune American World Sun Telegram & . . . . oh, forget it.

The Post Office has announced plans to issue a 5-cent stamp to commemorate the 175th anniversary of the ratification of the Bill of Rights. We are relieved. Some of the activities of postal inspectors had led us to wonder whether the Post Office was aware of the Bill's existence.

Special Forces is considering a new uniform: shaved heads and orange robes.

At the top of three flights of spiral, metal staircase in midtown Manhatten, a frosted-glass door bears a one-word sign: EROS. Inside sit three file cabinets filled with biographical material on Ralph Comstock, the first 12 issues of H. L. Mencken's American Mercury and occasionally, Ralph Ginsburg.

—*New York Times*

We didn't know he was in *that* tight a spot.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

FINDS FINORKLE FOUL

The piece [The Annotated State of the Union Address, Idler No. 18] can ony be described as sophmoric. It is cute, it is witty, it is facile, it is overflowing with platitudious jousting with symbolic devils, but it is, I regret, very glib and very shallow. The article is not worthy of a publication which purports to offer serious criticism and enlightened discussion of the important and weighty issues of the day.

I shall cite but a few examples of the author's shallow irrationality:

On page 10, in note 12, the author attempts to equate President Johnson with a notoriousy unsuccessful ex(?) politiican (Richard Nixon) because he used the phrase, "I report to you tonight." Rubbish!

In his message the President reported an increase of 2½ million jobs in the last year. In note 13 on page 12 we are informed of an "interesting coincidence" between the increase in jobs and an increase in the total population. Perhaps someone should explain to Dr. Finorkle that an increase in population would not of itself provide a corresponding increase in jobs. Jobs come from a strong, expanding and healthy economy, and a growing economy just might indicate a competent, steady, forthright hand on the tiler of power, and a nation's confidence in that hand.

In note 32, page 15, the author tries unsuccessfuly to determine the identity of three American Presidents who have given solemn pledges to the people and government of South Vietnam. I suggest that if the author seriously wants to find out who these Presidents were he should look to the *formal* commitments and the *actions* of Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson, instead of quoting isolated phrases independent of their context, or statements made in the heat of a political campaign.

In note 27, page 14, Dr. Finorkle points to Indonesia as "one of the Southeast Asian 'dominoes' that fell and then picked itself up with remarkably little assistance from the U.S." This displays an abysmal lack of understanding of the domino theory. Without attempting to explain, let alone defend the theory to the author (it would take an entire issue of your generally outstanding magazine to do so, and it is doubtful whether, even then, I would meet with any success) let me pose one question to the learned Dr. Does he suppose that Indonesia would have had such an easy time "picking itself up" if South Vietnam, and perhaps the Malay peninsula, were under the domination of China? I would suggest that the domino theory, even under the loosest of definitions, was not operative in the case of Indonesia and that the reason it is as yet inoperative is precisely our presence in Southeast Asia.

In conclusion, Sir, since Dr. Finorkle has chosen to exercise an inviolable right to anonymity, I shall exercise a right just as sacred, and assign his article forthwith to the trash can, where it will have the eminent but dubious company of the prattlings of others who choose to hide behind the protective cloak of a nom de plume. My fondest wish is that the witty Dr. may remain forever undisturbed in the comfortable womb of academic isolation.

M. R. Murphy
Ann Arbor, Mich.

I called Dr. Finorkle's office in order to obtain any comments he might have on your letter, but was informed that he had been called away unexpectedly upon a sabatical.—Ed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1. Under our commission-based advertising policy, our advertisers pay nothing until they sell their product. Rate: 10% of the selling price if under $100; 5% of selling price if between $100 and $1000 and 3% if over $1000. Commission on "for rent" and help wanted ads is based on one month's rent or salary. A line sketch 2" x 2" or smaller will help you sell your product. The Idler reserves the right to determine copy, size of ad and frequency of publication. The Idler assumes no responsibility in transactions.

2. We also sell space in the conventional manner. Our rates: $35 a page; $22 a half-page; $3 a column inch. No time or frequency discounts.

3. Classified rates: 10c a word.

4. Subscribers may insert brief free ads on a space-available basis. May not be selling or leasing a product or service.

5. Advertising deadline is the first of the preceding month.

Advertising Application

I request THE IDLER to run an advertisement concerning the product described below. I agree to pay THE IDLER 10% of the selling price if under $100, 5% if between $100 and $1000, or 3% if over $1000; if my product or article is sold as a result of an inquiry to THE IDLER, I agree to notify THE IDLER promptly of a sale, so that the ad may be withdrawn. I understand THE IDLER will assume no responsibility in transactions. I understand that the ad will be run at the discretion of THE IDLER and that it may be edited to meet space requirements.

Signature .....

Name (print) .....

Address .....

Advertisement Information:

(Give complete and interesting details. Include price.)

THE IDLER 125 5th St. N.E. Washington 2, D. C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Flotsam & Jetsam

☞WE WERE READING the *Washington Post* the other day and came across this item:

"Kansas City, Mo., Jan. 1 — Secretary of State Osborn of Kansas has prepared a circular in which he advocates making two hours per day the limit of work of each man.

"He holds that labor saving machinery has made such progress that one man is now able to do as much work as twenty did seventy-five years ago . . ."

The *Washington Post* we were reading was dated January 2, 1894.

☞TIME MAGAZINE HAS always been an upholder of high moral values and a critic of unruly protest demonstrations. We were therefore somewhat surprised by the extremely tolerant manner in which it treated the South Boston students who beat and bruised several draft card burners. *Time* had not one word of criticism for the brawlers and implied, in fact, that it was all good, clean fun. The magazine noted that the youths came from a neighborhood whose inhabitants "not only retain a good bit of the rough and tumble of their immigrant ancestors but take most unkindly to unpatriotic displays."

Well, we also retain a good bit of the rough and tumble of our immigrant ancestors but we see nothing particularly patriotic or praiseworthy about going around slugging people who don't agree with you — even those, such as *Time* editors, who sorely tempt you.

To SUBSCRIBE

To: THE IDLER
125 Fifth St. NE
Washington 2, D.C.

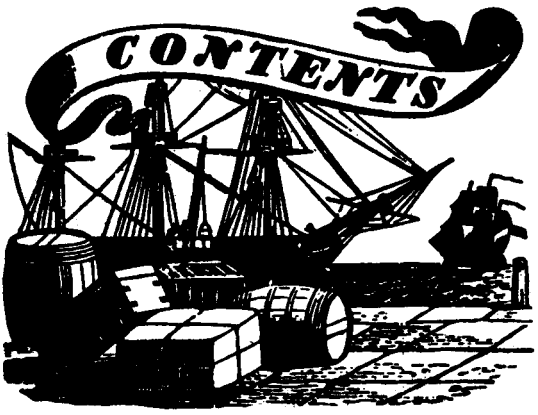
Please enter my subscription to THE IDLER for one year at $3.00 ($4.00 abroad). I enclose check or money order in the proper amount.

Name .....

Address .....

..... **Zip Code**.....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



ARE THE POOR READY FOR PROGRESS? ..... Page 1
ENID SAUNDERS CANDLIN: A RENAISSANCE BUDGET ..... Page 4
RALPH NADER: DRIVING US TO DEATH—II ..... Page 6
THE MCDOWELL PAPERS ..... Page 11
THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE ..... Page 12
GANDALF: YALE DISCOVERS AMERICA ..... Page 14
A. H. BERZEN: MIGHTIER THAN ANY SWORD ..... Page 22
THE CORNER APHORIST ..... Page 24
LETTER FROM LORELEI ..... Page 26
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ..... Page 29

And Numerous Other Diversions

THE IDLER
125 5th St. NE
Washington, D. C.-20002

Return Requested

Bulk Rate
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Warren, R. I.
Permit No. 36

DATED MATERIAL

THIRD CLASS MAIL

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED